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ABSTRACT

The findings in this paper raise questions about the validity of educational assumptions underlying efforts to reform "bureaucratic dysfunctions" in the schools. Although specific reforms are not examined, there is a tenuous connection between bureaucratic organization of schools and the kinds of teacher attitudes toward clients so often cited as the justification for changes. Contrary to conventional expectations, the ability of teachers to interact with parents and students without conflict, and to accept pedagogical and organizational reforms, appears enhanced by the reliance on clear and concise rules for teacher behavior in areas such as student discipline and relations with parents. Organizational strategies that enable teachers to make difficult decisions, sort out ambiguous situations, and reaffirm frequently challenged authority are often well received. Extensive school rules for teacher behavior in such circumstances are apparently compatible with teacher expectations and, therefore, a reasonably successful administrative strategy. (Author)

SCHOOL BUREAUCRACY AND POLITICAL CONFLICT*

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In recent years, urban institutions have been the battlegrounds for intense rhetorical, and, at times, physical violences. Many school reformers and social scientists have charged bureaucracy with much of the responsibility for this conflict—fostering impersonal treatment of clients, rigidity, arrogance and compulsive conformity to narrow rules. The purpose of this paper is to partially test such assertions by examining the relationship between school bureaucracy and teachers attitudes bearing on performance that have been linked to school conflict.

The Teacher and School Politics

Perhaps because of their intimate connection with the daily lives of most citizens, public schools have experienced more than their share of unrest. One arena of conflict has been at the level of system-wide policy-making--over such mighty issues as community control, desegregation, budgets, selection of superintendents and school boards, school construction and taxes, union recognition, personnel recruitment and tenure. These areas of conflict, in which decisions are made at the top of the school system hierarchy, do not exhaust, however, the range of school-community conflict, or the ways in which urban institutions intersect the lives of city residents.

Another face of urban conflict occurs at the lower end of the organizational ladder, where teachers and their immediate clients (pupils and parents) frequently seem frustrated, aggressive, and hostile in their dealings with one another. Teacher-client relations need not, of course, be characterized by conflict. More typical patterns

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involve cooperation, compliance, or at the least, indifference. Nevertheless, the way in which people perceive the delivery of educational services, and in large measure what those services actually are, is the product of these daily face-to-face encounters.

Although public discussion of school affairs commonly arises when major conflicts, key decisions, changes in leadership, or other events receive the focus of media coverage, this represents only a fraction of the continuous relationship between schools and a their constituents. Likewise, concentration of scholarly study upon system-wide issues such as school board elections, desegregation battles, and bond issues fails to capture a dimension of school politics, which is largely routine and unobserved by individuals other than the immediate participants. The delivery of educational services in schools and classrooms offers an opportunity for citizens to view local government as it affects their daily lives. decisions regarding curriculum, instructional materials, and student discipline represent small, but cumulatively significant examples of the way in which teachers control a vital dimension in the flow This view regards teachers of educational resources to students. and educational administrators as part of the political process. Like elected officials or the traditional party machine, their decisions and behavior significantly influence the nature of government services.

This perspective also illustrates the way in which more general conceptions of public administration have changed. Although traditional theories clearly distinguish politics and public administration, contemporary students increasingly regard administrative discretion as a prominent aspect of policy-making. Traditional theorists argue that the goals of government are established by elected or appointed political officials—the mayor, president, or legislators—while administrative underlings are limited to the achievement of objectives. As stated by Woodrow Wilson: "The broad plans of governmental action are not administrative; the detailed execution of such plans is administrative."1

With the growth of public bureaucracies has come abundant evidence, however, that administrative discretion extends beyond the implementation of decisions to the very formulation of public policy. Francis Rourke notes that "the scope of this administrative discretion is vast with respect to both everyday decisions of government agencies



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and the major innovative trend-setting decisions of organizational life." The exercise of bureaucratic discretion over routine, everyday matters is as significant for the individuals involved as is prior adminstrative "shaping" of major programs and policies.

There are, of course, other perspectives from which to view teachers within the political system. Schools serve as socializing agents, and teachers may have a significant role to play in the early formulation of children's political attitudes and values. In addition, to the extent that teachers may influence the acquisition of basic skills, knowledge, and analytic abilities, they may also shape the subsequent life chances of their students as adults. Nevertheless, in the daily interaction between teacher and client, a significant dimension of the political systems goes unobserved by normal political analysis;

Perspectives on Bureaucracy

A striking characteristic of the modern organization is its formal system of rules for the allocation of resources, authority, and basic tasks. This structure is intended to set out procedures for the efficient achievement of stated objectives. In an organization such as a school, where many of the core activities center around interpersonal relationships, the ability of bureaucratic rules to channel the energies of teachers toward desired ends is increasingly questioned; rather, many argue that such a formal system induces behavior that detracts from educational objectives.

With the decline of old party machines, government bureaucracies have assumed basic responsibility for the delivery of essential public services. Where welfare, legal aid and family counseling were once provided by neighborhood ward leaders, these functions have been largely taken over by public agencies. Although some citizers perceive bureaucracies as exercising their powers in ways similar to machines—conferring benefits on some and withholding them from others—the growth of bureaucracy ocurred with quite different goals in mind. With its emphasis on objective rules for decision—making, it was thought that bureaucracy would influence behavior toward efficiency and rationality.³

In schools, organizational rules might guide teachers to act in ways that support the educational objectives of schools. There are several ways in which rules for teacher behavior may accomplish this purpose. Blau and Scott emphasize that a system of formally structured roles limits the range of informal interaction and the amount of deviation from organizational goals.⁴ The ability of



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subgroups and cliques to pursue independent courses that undermine organizational effectiveness is diminished when leaders articulate expectations through the enforcement of rules. In addition to quiding behavior, rules have other functions as well. protect teachers from criticism by transferring responsibility for unpopular behavior to leaders who make the rules. Principals are also expected to support teachers who enforce the school rules; by suggesting that teacher behavior is rooted in organizational rules rather than personal whim, behavior of teachers acquires the aura of rationality. In sum, it can be argued that bureaucratic rules enhance the probable attainment of legitimate school objectives by guiding behavior, specifying the basis for decision-making, and limiting responsibility. Rules serve to reduce role ambiguity and augment teacher resources in areas of precarious By substituting organizational rules for the exercise of discretion, much of the affective basis underlying teacher behavior is diminished. Consequently, teachers are less likely to perceive conflict as a personal threat.

Others have severely critized bureaucratic organization, claiming it directs behavior away from educational goals by (a) substituting decisions based on position in a formal hierarchy for those derived from knowledge and expertise, (b) adversely affecting the attitudes of those responsible for carrying out basic tasks, and (c) placing organizational interests above those of clients.⁵

Many school reformers and social scientists have claimed that bureaucracy, in the form of rules for teacher behavior, breeds apathy, arrogance toward clients, minimum performance, and rigid, ritualistic behavior. Critics have charged that school bureaucracies are too large, too hierarchical, too impersonal and in a heterogeneous urban environment, too insulated from the educational needs of different clientele groups. School bureaucracy, its critics charge, substitutes a narrow conformity to rules in place of sound educational judgement, defies organizational needs while neglecting those of clients, and minimizes personal interaction with students and parents.

This view of school bureaucracy imbeds many discussions of educational policy. The thesis that bureaucratic organization generates a vicious cycle of rule conformity, rigidity and impersonal treatment of clients has prompted various reformers to call for the debureaucratization of schooling. Currently touted educational reforms such as vouchers, community control, performance contracting, and



mastery learning are motivated, in part, by a desire to curb the "pathological" consequences of bureaucracy.

Although popular jargon equates bureaucracy with ineptitude, red tape, employee dissatisfaction and low productivity, several studies Bonjean and Grimes found have drawn quite different conclusions. "alienation" somewhat greater among workers in non-bureaucratic settings. 6 Similarly, Kohn concluded that workers in bureaucratic organizations are more likely than those in non-bureaucratic settings to exhibit self-direction, open-mindedness, a sense of personal responsibility, and receptivity to change. Anderson attempted to apply a bureaucratic model to explain teacher behavior in a sample of junior high schools. He found, centrary to his hypothesis, a negative relationship between teacher perceptions of conflicting authority and the level of bureaucratic rules for teacher behavior; where administrators established specific rules for instruct teachers were least likely to perceive threats to their professionintegrity.8 In addition, organizational rules were unrelated to the impersonal treatment of students by teachers, or teacher resistance to innovation. A study by Moeller and Charters indicated that teachers in bureaucratic schools "had a significantly higher-not lower, sense of power in school accision--making than those in less bureaucratic systems."9

The assumption that subordinates seek to maximize their role in organizational decisions has been strongly challenged by Michael In his insightful study of French bureaucracy, Crozier Croz.er. argues "that a bureaucratic system of organization always relies on a certain amount of compulsory participation which appears to be, under the present conditions, more gratifying for the individual, than the voluntary participation for which, it is perhaps, con readily believed -- he is fighting. "10 Crozier argues that contrary to conventional wisdom, rules serve to increase the independence and bargaining power of subordinates. Within the boundaries delimited by rules, workers are free to make extensive commitment to the organization, or to engage in behavior they find more personally rewarding. Rules also vest subordinates with power, for compliance may be bargained in exchange for special benefits. While these studies may be limited in that they do not use common or comparable measures of "bureaucracy," taken as a whole, they question the conventional wisdom that school bureaucracy is the cause of teacher dissatisfaction, red tape, inefficiency or serious mistreatment of clients.



Another way of looking at school administration is in terms of its non-bureaucratic character. Through design or incapacity, organizational tasks are frequently delegated to teachers by the absence of formal rules. Teachers often report, for example, they are expected to handle discipline problems on their own, without rules for appropriate behavior. Resort to higher authority is considered a sign of ineffectiveness. Such non-bureaucratic systems are composed of fairly autonomous individuals, performing tasks independent of formal rules or close scrutiny.

"Street-level bureaucrats", 11 such as police and teachers, are commonly pictured as having considerable discretion over the performance of basic tasks. Police and teachers, on the beat or in self-contained classrooms, are largely isolated from their super-This physical separation diminishes the ability of administrators to monitor behavior or insure that subordinates will make proper decisions in "spur of the moment" crises. A key issue under these conditions is the way in which the exercise of discretion evolves into adaptive strategies consistent with organizational objectives.

Research Methods

This paper examines the relationship between structural aspects of bureaucracy n public schools and those outcomes--custodial teacher attitudes, routinzation of behavior, hostility toward parents, resistance to innovation, and so on--with which the term bureaucracy is frequently synonymous. Most of the data in this study is drawn from teacher responses to a written survey questionnaire. instrument was administered to a sample of Baltimore City elementary school teachers during the 1971-1972 school year. In selecting a sample of teachers, all elementary schools in Baltimore were crossstratified on the basis of size of the student body and income level of parents. This assured some variability on key dimensions of school organization and clientele characteristics. A sample of 31 schools was randomly selected; a close-ended questionnaire was administered to second, third, fifth and sixth grade teachers.13 Two-hundred twenty usable questionnaires were returned; the response rate was 70%.14

From responses to the questionnaire, Guttman scales were developed to measure dimensions of school bureaucracy and a variety of teacher attitudes bearing on classroom performance, relations with clients and supervisors. 15 Critics of school bureaucracy have argued that formal rules determine the nature of daily encounters between teach-



ers, pupils, parents and principal. Consequently, school bureaucracy has been operationally defined as the extent to which specific aspects of teaching activity are governed by formal school rules that are generally enforced.

Scales of measurement for school bureaucracy commonly exhibit two defects--they ask teachers to draw conclusions rather than describe the kinds of school rules that actually exist, and secondly, they treat teaching as a unitary task--typically focusing on student instruction. In order to minimize the first problem -- of totally subjective teacher responses about school organization -- this study inquired about specific activities of teachers in the classroom. For example, the questions dealt with school rules about the preparation of lesson plans, selection of textbooks, children going to the bathroom, meeting with parents, etc. It attempted to deal with the second common defect -- a too limited focus on the organization of instruction-by treating school organization of the teaching task as a multidimensional concept. Questions were asked about three aspects of the teaching role--classroom discipline and order maintenance, instruction, and parent-teacher communication. separate scales of school organization were developed (by averaging the responses of teachers in each school), one for each area, in order to avoid obsuring intra-school variation between areas of organizational procedure.

Guttman scales were also developed to measure six different teacher atticudes.16 The latter include custodial orientation toward pupils, routinization of classroom behavior, hostility toward parents, resistance to parental participation in school decision-making, resistance to innovation, and hostility toward the principal. These attitudes were chosen because of their seeming importance for the quality of educational service rendered by schools, impact on the teacher-client relationship, and primarily, because of their theoretical correspondence to sources of conflict attributed to bureaucracy.

School Rules and Custodial Orientation Toward Pupils

The custodial orientation emphasizes subordination of pedagogical tasks to the maintenence of classroom discipline, threats to teacher authority, and a sense of pervasive disorder in the school. Teachers expressing custodial attitudes often perceive discipline as the



overriding issue in the school, one that threatens the authority of school officials, and may be symptomatic of broader social disarray. Ardent critics of school bureaucracy frequently regard the custodial atmosphere found in classrooms as the product of organizationally mandated rule-conformity by teachers. The findings in this study, however, depart dramatically in several areas from the conventional stereotype of bureaucratic dysfunctions. The chief findings are:

- A negative association between formal discipline rules and custodial orientation toward pupils. Where administrators "lay down the law" with respect to student discipline, teachers are least likely to express a custodialcontrol oriented view of teaching.
- o An inverse relationship between rules for parent-teacher relations and custodial orientation among teachers. As before, strong guidelines from the principal seem to diminish the likelihood that teachers will seek to secure their status through restrictive custodial attitudes. The association is strongest among teachers in schools, with high student achievement, low truancy, and high parent income.
- o Among teachers in schools whose clientele are predominantly black, and are characterized by low student achievement and high truancy, as the level of formal rules for instruction increases, so too does the incidence of costodial attitudes among teachers.



ASSOCIATION (YULE'S Q) BETWEEN FORMAL RULES AND CUSTODIAL ORIENTATION OF TEACHERS, CONTROLLING FOR STUDENT BODY CHARACTERISTICS, N=220

Association Between Custodial Teacher Attitudes and Formal Rules for:

Student Body Characteristics	Discipline	Instruction	Parent- Teacher Relations
Achievement			
Low	10	.30	04
High	30	17	59
Per Cent White			
Low	10	· . 29	.01
High	23	11	53
Truancy			
## gh	19	.22	22
Low	18	21	35
Parent Income			
Low	27	.15	10
High	11	13	24



Discipline Rules and Custodial Attitudes

It is not surprising that custodial attitudes of teachers are related to administrative practices regarding discipline in the school. Several studies indicate that teacher attitudes toward students, the principal, and the school in general, are closely connected to the way in which discipline problems are handled, and the sense of administrative support in this area.17 The negative association between discipline rules and custodial attitudes, however, contrasts with the general tone found in much organizational research. According to critics of bureaucracy, one might have expected teachers in schools with a high level of disciplinary rules to express more impersonal distrusting, or arrogant feelings about pupils. The data suggest, however, that teachers in su h schools are less fearful of threats to their authority, disorder, or the consequences of relationships with students than are teachers in schools with few rules for discipline. The explanation of this finding involves three concepts:

- o The experience of dealing with discipline problems often gives rise to feelings of frustration, anxiety, and threats to authority among teachers;
- o Custodial attitudes are a means of "coping" with these feelings, reducing the sense of inconsistency with other dimensions of the teaching role;
- The function of formal rules for discipline is to alleviate much of the burden upon teachers, transferring responsibility the principal, and thereby moderating some of the tensions giving rise to custodial attitudes.

Maintaining order and discipline in the classroom involves a large measure of discretion and individual judgment on the part of the teacher. Supervisors, colleagues, perhaps even students, expect teachers to handle ordinary discipline problems on their own. For the most part, teachers feel that academic preparation is of limited value when applied to everyday crisis in classroom discipline. Predictability, control, and stability largely derive from personal arrangements and style, neither of which are defined by the official teacher role or professional norms. In handling disciplinary problems, the teacher is drawn into an extensive



social relationship with students, in which personalities and subjective considerations can be more important than any authority flowing from the official position of the teacher.

A high level of conflict in some classes creates among teachers a sense of isolation, ambiguity, and inadequate authority. Although the teacher is expected to maintain discipline in the classroom and prevent conflicts from spilling over into public view—in the hallway, cafeteria, on field trips, and among visitors, there is very little in his or her professional training that suggests remedies to contain conflict. In contrast, the teacher possesses a range of diagnostic techniques for instruction and cognitive development, which if utilized, fulfill expectations for adequate performance. In addition, teachers can consult with peers on matters of instruction without seeming to expose their own short-commings.

These factors in the nature of teacher expertise are intensified by the absence of role boundaries to distinguish areas of teacher responsibility from those of parents, or society in general. contrast to instructional matters, where professional expertise clarifies the boundaries of authority, teachers and parents occupy overlapping roles in many matters related to discipline, moral education, and socialization of the child. For a portion of each day, the teacher assumes responsibilities that were previously the province of parents. School prayer, for example is one national issue in which the border line between school and parent responsibility has been hotly disputed. Seating arrangements and restrictions on children walking around the classroom are less dramatic areas in which parents are apt to perceive efforts to maintain order as autocratic barriers diminishing childhood curiosity. Where the boundaries of appropriate role behavior between parent, community, and school are fuzzy, teachers may become enbroiled in conflicts with parents over different interpretations of each other's responsibility.



In contrast to instruction, the discipline task is characterized by limited organizational authority, broad but vaguely defined professional norms regarding behavior, conflicting role expectations, and extensive personal contacts between teachers and pupils, and some parents. Although the need to maintain order in the classroom is almost always recognized, the standards that separate deviance from acceptable behavior, and the means used to curb disorder, are often matters of subjective judgment and great contention in schools.

The custodial orientation refers to attitude and behavior traits in which the dominant role of the teacher is seen in terms of the maintenance of classroom order and defense against threats to authority. It may be argued that the custodial orientation is an adaptive strategy to reduce the gap between limited authority, unavoidable pressure to handle discipline problems within the classroom, lack of professional norms, and the personal needs of teachers for some degree of predictability, control and stability in daily relationships.

The custodial orientation offers a rudimentary philosophy for daily classroom management and a means of limiting the psychological risks posed by extensive personal involvement with clients. It suggests priorities among the various teaching functions of control, instruction, socialization, and certification. In addition, it establishes a buffer between teacher and student in which classroom conflict need not appear to be interpersonal in nature; rather, classroom conflict may be regarded as a product of the formal "adversarial" roles occupied by teachers and students.

James Q. Wilson has argued that police employ rituals and routines, categorization of clients, and informal codes of behavior as a protection against the ambiguous, discretionary, and personally threatening aspects of their responsibility to maintain order. 18 Similarly, studies in mental hospitals cite the rejection of therapeutic values, macakre jokes about patients, and obsession with organization details as a means worker use to detach themselves from personal involvement with patients.



In this study, teachers in schools with extensive rules for discipline are less likely to express custodial attitudes than are teachers in schools with minimal rules in this area. Disciplinary rules serve a positive function in clarifying and formalizing expectations regarding this sensitive aspect of the teaching role. Such rules reduce the extent of subjective, or personal involvement in occupational roles. Rules serve as guides to behavior, confer authority, and provide grounds for teachers to defend themselves against criticism. Rules may also communicate the intention of a In short, formalized rules principal to "back up" the faculty. for discipline provide the teacher with resources that reduce the sense of ambiguity, isolation, inadequate authority, and personal threat commonly found among those performing discipline tasks. In the absence of organizational rules for discipline, on the other hand, teachers are likely to employ custodial-type strategies in order to bolster authority and reduce ambiguity regarding the performance of discipline tasks.

Rules for Parent-Teacher Relations and Custodial Accitudes

In schools with extensive rules for parent-teacher relations teachers are less likely to express custodial attitudes than are teachers in schools with few such rules. This finding is quite notable in middle-class white schools, where parent income and student achievement are high, and truancy rates are low. In lower-class black schools there is neglible association between rules for parent-teacher relations and custodial teacher attitudes.

Teacher relations with parents contain many of the same attributes found in the disciplinary task. Becker notes that conversations between teachers and parents most frequently dwell on the subject of discipline--variable the teacher is defending some action against criticism or seeking help from parents to curb student excess. 20 Bowman has suggested that perhaps 90% of the criticisms of teachers arise from the manner in which discipline problems are handled. 21 Similarly, Jennings's analysis of a national sample of parent attitudes indicates that the great majority of parental grievances deal with matters other than curriculum--the style in which students are taught rather than what they are actually taught. 22 In some ways, dealing with parents is an extension of the classroom disciplinary task, characterized by vague notions of professional



expertise, limited official authority, conflicting role expectations, and extensive personal involvement in face-to-face relations with parents. While some teachers derive great satisfaction in working under these conditions, others experience a sense of inability to handle responsibilities, disordered school relationships and threats to authority.

It has been argued that teachers in middle and upper class communities feel more threatened by parents than do those teaching in lower-class schools. The middle-class school, as noted by Sieber, Becker and others, is often characterized by a high degree of parental participation, articulateness, and assertiveness; 23 many parents in these schools also possess professional credentials equivalent or superior to those of the teacher.

In addition to direct participation, middle and upper-class parents are more likely than lower-class parents to engage in a form of indirect teacher observation. Checking homework and asking children about their school day are means of finding out about classroom activities. Through their children, parents learn a great deal about classroom practices, teachin methods and school services.

This kind of indirect observation may make some teachers feel uncomfortable; they may come to regard pupils as conduits for parental scrutiny—giving rise to custodial teacher attitudes.

Formal rules for parent-teacher relations reduce this sense of threat by defining, limiting, and specifying appropriate role behavior for teachers and parents. For example, school rules may tell a teacher when to expect parents in the classroom, and what to do if unexpected entry interrupts the lesson. Such rules remove the burden of decision-making from teachers, and provide some protection against what may seem to be unreasonable demands. Thus, in middle-class schools, as the level of rules for parent-teacher relations increases, the proportion of teachers who express custodial attitudes declines.

Rules for Instruction and Custodial Attitudes

The relationship between rules for instruction and custodial attitudes toward students offers an interesting contrast. Among teachers in inner-city schools (those that are low achieving, predominantly black, and have high truancy), one finds a positive association between the level of instructional rules and custodial attitudes; in middle-class settings, however, the relationship is almost negligible. 34



In performing the instructional task, the tracher possesses a wide range of professional expertise obtained from college training and on-the-job experience. College courses in curriculum, planning, testing, methods, and so on, provide preparation with some value for instructional behavior in the classroom. In addition, school resources such as textbooks, teacher guides, instructional material, remedial specialists, and supervisors offer rich sources of technical assistance. These factors are reflected in public perceptions of teacher expertise. In a study of teacher roles, Biddle argues:

Americans have come to expect that teachers both possess a college education and will meet minimal standards of certification set by the states. Thus, it is felt that teachers are a well trained professionalized body... who are competent to instruct (my emphasis). This contrasted with the perception of teacher performance in roles requiring social skills and group management. 25

Instruction, in contrast to discipline, is characterized by a higher level of technology, predictability, professional expertise, organizational support, and role specificity—all of which structure the teaching process and legitimize teacher expertise in the eyes of constituents. Authority sterming from organizational rules for instruction may contlict with other professional expectations.

Teacher autonomy over classroom decisions pertaining to instruction is a



strong component of professional teacher expectations. Teachers may feel that rules for instruction infringe upon areas of professional prerogative. To teachers, principals who enforce rules for instruction may appear to be more interested in orderliness than in the substance of learning, or more responsive to superiors than to the needs of faculty and students.

Adopting a custodial attitude is one means of reducing the incongruity between professional and bureaucratic role expectations. The custodial orientation can reconcile incompatible demands upon teachers by subordinating instruction to the maintenance of order, and by externalizing responsibility for educational deficiencies. For example, teachers may attribute classroom problems to such factors as the lack of principal support, excessive administrative restrictions, lack of discipline and respect for authority among students, diversion of paper work, or political interference in schools.

Summary

Although organizational theorists have suggested a basic cleavage between the bureaucracic principles of school organization and the professional expectations of well-trained and experienced teachers, the results just discussed indicate quite a different picture. By examining varied teaching functions--discipline, instruction, and parent-teacher relations, it was shown that the interaction between organizational characteristics and custodial teacher attitudes depends largely on factors intrinsic to particular segments of the overall teaching role. While the evidence suggests between bureaucratic rules for instruction and professional teacher expectations in this area, instruction represents a significant but nonetheless limited dimension of overall teaching responsi-In other areas such as discipline and relations with parents, teachers welcome active administrative intervention in classroom life, perceiving bureaucratic rules as supportive rather than restrictive, and bolstering authority instead of undermining In the absence of such rules, teachers are likely to embrace custodial attitudes. While unfortuanate from the viewpoint of school relations with clientele, such attitudes help teachers reduce the gap between what is expected in the way of classroom management and the resources available to accomplish such tasks.



These results clearly differ from the picture described by ardent critics of school bureaucracy. The areas in which teachers operate with minimal hierarchical direction--discipline and relations with parents-are also the ones where parents feel the greatest unease about school performance. They are also the domains in which teachers are most likely to express custodial attitudes. If clients sometimes perceive bureaucracy as impersonal and inflexible, they are just as frequently irked by feelings that school officials are inconsistent or behave on the basis of personal convenience and whim. Efforts to minimize bureaucratic forms of school organizations (as they affect teachers) may address the former concern while exacerbating tensions that produce custodial attitudes among ceachers. The remainder of this paper assesses the extent to which a similar relationship prevails with respect to school bureaucracy and other teacher attitudes affecting classroom performance.

School Rules and the Use of Classroom Routines

Routines are commonly used as a means of controlling student behavior, establishing authority, and maintaining order in the classmoom. Teachers frequently believe that "grooving the children" reduces the risk that discipline problems will escalate into more serious threats to their own classroom control. Some would argue that routinization of classroom behavior represents an extension of larger bureaucratic principles characteristic of schools as a whole. Standardization of such day-to-day classroom functions as entering and leaving the room, moving about the class, and speaking with fellow students is said to derive from a bureaucratic philosophy that emphasizes order, routines, and structure.

This study supports a different view of the relationship between bureaucratic rules for teacher behavior and the use of routines in classroom management. Surprisingly, we found that there is little association between the level of formal school-wide rules for discipline and reliance by teachers upon classroom routines.



In inner city schools, however, there is a clear tendency for centralized rules for instruction to diminish the extensive use of classroom routines by teachers. For example, among teachers in schools with low student achievement, 38% use extensive classroom routines where there are few instructional rules, but only 22% do so in schools with a high level of instructional rules. A similar pattern exists among teachers in schools that have a predominantly black student body or in which students are from low income families.

As previously noted, routines are often intended to control student behavior and maintain order. It seems plausible that formalized instructional procedures provide a substitute for the routines that: teachers might develop on their own. Activities in the classroom become structured around required pedagogical procedures, minimizing the need for additional control routines. In short, highly structured curriculum is a less obtrusive way to control student behavior than are overt rules and routines.

Other types of bureaucratic rules do not appear to increase the routinization of teacher behavior in the classroom either. Negative associations between rules for parent-teacher relations and the use of routines by teachers, notably in low income (Q=-.33)and low achieving schools (Q=-.29), reaffirm previous findings that dysfunctional behavior may diminish with greater reliance upon bureaucratic principles of school organization. Although inner city teachers are least attracted to heavy use of classroom routines when they can rely upon appropriate school-wide rules, there does not appear to be any relationship between bureaucratic rules and routines for teachers in middle class neighborhoods. One possible explanation rests on differences in parental expectations toward school. The typical lower class parent, according to Hess, tells her child to obey the teacher, whereas middle class parents are more likely to emphasize learning skills.26 This distinction is supported by Hant and Rasof, who found "the teacher in the middle income, white classroom achieves control, at least in part, through a technique not mentioned by her but reported by the children--the



threat of a "list," presumably of those not to be promoted on which they might be put."27 Lower-class children were less responsive to rewards and punishments based upon academic status. Sieber's work confirms this distinction: he found that as socioeconomic status of parents increases, there is a shift toward preferences (among mothers) for "content-oriented" teachers and away from "control-oriented" teachers.28 While all parents may generally have similar expectations from schools, these studies suggest that middle-class parents emphasize instruction and learning activities, whereas the lower-class parent is more inclined to evaluate teachers in terms of order and classroom control.

Our findings indicate that where there are minimal rules, teachers in low-income, low achievement schools use classroom routines quite heavily. By implementing routines for student behavior, the teachers in these schools, it may be argued, are responding the lower-class parents' expectations for classroom control. Where the parent-teacher relation-ship is regulated by school rules, however, teachers have a degree of insulation from this kind of parental expectation, and therefore, are less likely to rely upon classroom routines. Where relations between teachers and parents are unregulated, the typical mode of teacher behavior tries to satisfy parent expectations through the heavy use of classroom routines. Under the circumstances, such teacher behavior is rational, though few educators would consider it pedagogically sound.

School Rules and Attitudes To lard Parents

In most respects, teachers and parents share a broad common interest in the education of children. In other ways, however, they hold competing views of the role of school—the teacher has responsibility for the class as a whole; the parent, of course, is most



ASSOCIATION (YULE'S Q) BETWEEN FORMAL RULES AND TEACHER HOSTILITY TOWARD PARTI CONTROLLING FOR STUDENT BODY CHARACTERISTICS, N=220

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concerned with the individual needs of his or her particular child. This kind of situation contains the seeds of potential conflict in which (a) parents scrutinize teacher behavior for possible bias, or practices that may threaten the values and attitudes they have attempted to inculate in their children, and (b) teachers solicit support from parents and seek to avoid disputes that challenge their professional judgment and authority.

Many believe that the bureaucratic nature of schools contributes to teacher-client conflict. The management of educational services through rules and procedures, it is argued, gives rise to compulsive rule conformity; relations between teachers and parents are impersonal and teachers jealously guard their authority against potential threats from parents. The findings in this study again contradict the conventional wisdom that bureaucracy breeds pathological teacher behavior and attitudes. In lower class schools, as bureaucratic rules (for student discipline and relations with parents) increase, teachers are less likely to perceive parents as disruptive, hostile or uncooperative. Such hostile attitudes are expressed most frequently by teachers in the least bureaucratic schools. 29

where rules for discipline and dealing with parents are fuzzy or non-existent, teachers are likely to perceive parents as threats to their authority, as uncooperative, or as a disruptive influences in the school. In his study of a high school, Gordon argued that in order to maintain discipline in the classroom, teachers often have to substitute personal, affective forms of authority for impersonal organizational sanctions. The teacher acquires a strong stake in protecting the investment of such personal resources from what may appear to be "outside meddling."

Rules of behavior are a means of reducing the reliance on forms of personal authority. They provide teachers with a way of handling situations in a non-affective manner. Rules serve as rudimentary guides to behavior, bases of defense agains criticism, and a



means of invoking administrative support against complaints. Where formal rules for discipline and relations with parents are explicitly stated, teacher authority appears to be derived from an institutional source rather than personal relationships with clients. The teacher, as a person, is distinguished from his or her organizational role. Conflicts may challenge the organizational role of teachers without suggesting personal culpability. The teacher is therefore less likely to perceive parents as threats to classroom hegemony.

Throughout this paper, discipline rules and various teacher attitudes have been most closely associated in schools where clients are predominantly black and lower-class, undoubtedly reflecting the importance of disciplinary matters to teachers in such schools. We also found, contrary to popular stereotype, that the most burecucratic schools are often the ones in which teacher attitudes conform closest to public standards of propriety. This observation is based on teacher attitudes toward students, parents, and the use of routines. Because the consequences of school bureaucracy are often at the center of discussions of school reform, it is also appropriate to examine the way in which teachers view various policy issues. Therefore, we assessed general teacher attitudes toward parental participation and toward school innovation.

Attitudes Toward Parental Participation And School Innovation

It is again apparent that rules for discipline are an important predictor of teacher attitudes, and that the most notable relationships occur in low SES schools. Once more the pattern of findings differs from conventional wisdom: among teachers in predominantly black, lower-class schools, those most likely to resist parental participation and school innovation are in settings with minimal rules for discipline of students. Conversely, where the discipline task of teachers is tightly structured through hierarchical rules for behavior, teachers are more receptive to parental participation in decision-making or other school innovations.



ASSOCIATION (YULE'S Q) BETWEEN DISCIPLINE RULES AND TEACHER RESISTANCE TO PARENTAL PARTICIPATION IN SCHOOL DECISION-MAKING, RESISTANCE TO INNOVATION, CONTROLLING FOR STUDENT BODY CHARACTERISTICS, N=220

Student Body Characteristics	Association Between Discipline Rules and:			
	Teacher Resistance to Parental Participation	Teacher Resistance to School Innovation		
Achievement				
Low	22	32		
High	07	01		
Per cent White				
Low	22	43		
High	~.09	07		
Truancy	·			
High	28	20		
Low	06	19		
Parent Income				
Low	18	24		
High	10	10		
		_		



As previously emphasized, teachers often see themselves handling disciplinary tasks in the context of diffuse and ambiguous role expectations, with limited professional and organizational sources of support. These factors encourage the investment of personal teacher resources in defining role behavior, and in developing authority relationships adequate to handle the task. The teacher acquires a personal stake in maintaining the existing pattern of social accomodations. Organizational innovation and parental participation represent potential threats to this delicately balanced arrangement.

A basic function of rules is to substitute official, impersonal criteria of decision-making for subjective, whimsical, or personal standards. In specifying behavior, rules diminish the sense of personal teacher liability for preserving authority relationships. The incentive to protect existing arrangements from parental participation and school innovation declines where teachers do not see a personal stake in the outcome of such changes. Rules accomplish their purpose by reducing the investment of "self," allowing the teacher to view the consequences of change from a more detached position.

We also found that teachers in low truancy, high income schools are most inclined to resist parental participation where there are four rules governing parent-teacher relations. Likewise, teachers in largely white, high income schools have a tendency to oppose educational initiatives when their school has few rules for parent-teacher relations. In schools with extensive rules in this area, teachers are more likely to be receptive to parental participation and educational reform.

Other findings (not presented in this paper) indicate that teachers in the largely white, high income schools are more likely than others to oppose forms of parental participation and educational innovation, regardless of administrative practices in their schools. In these schools parents tend to actively and articulately press their educational expectations on teachers and officials. Teachers may feel that their professional autonomy is threatened by parental scrutiny or school innovation. The prospect of new authority relationships is particularly disquieting, for teachers in middle class schools derive considerable satisfaction from knowing they work in what is normally considered the "better" schools.



Rules regarding parent-teacher relations may reduce this sense of threat by placing boundaries on parental activity in school matters, and structuring the kind of contact that parents and teachers have with one another. As a result, among middle-class schools, those with extensive rules for parent-teacher relations are less likely to have teachers who are resistant to parental participation and educational innovativeness than schools with minimal rules in this area.

School Rules and Teacher Attitudes Toward the Principal

In the daily activities of the school, the principal represents the basic source of organizational authority to teachers. He exercises control over the flow of educational resources into the classroom, mediates disputes and sets standards for teacher behavior. The principal wields influence in evaluating teachers, encouraging or discouraging creativity, lending personal support to teachers, and perhaps, interacting as senior colleague among peers. The principal may also incur the hostility of teachers were he or she to exercise authority in a manner contrary to their expectations, or fail to assert authority in other ways.

It is sematimes suggested that the exercise of hierarchical authority by the principal conflicts with professional norms emphasizing teacher autonomy, collegial control, and authority based on expertise. At least one study, however, has concluded that principals are surprisingly unbureaucratic: "principals desire less rules for incumbents (teachers), less precedural specifics and less impersonative than do teachers." Others argue that reaction to the administrative style of the principal ultimately depends on the degree to which teacher expectations conflict with perceptions of actual practice, regardless of the substantive content of such expectations.



ASSOCIATION (YULE'S Q) BETWEEN FORMAL RULES AND TEACHER HOSTILITY TOWARD THE PRINCIPAL, CONTROLLING FOR STUDENT BODY CHARACTERISTICS, N=220

Association Between Hostility Toward the Principal and Formal Rules For:

Student Body Characteristics	Discipline	Instruction	Parent- Teacher Relations
Achievement			
Low	19	.08	06
High	18	.40	09
Per Cent White			
Low	14	.00	10
High	23	.4 6	.12
Truancy			
High	29	.35	.19
Low	.01	.20	08
Parent Income			
Low	33	.32	0 9
High	.00	.19	.12



This research for (see preceding table) that the respect teachers have for the principal is greatest in schools with extensive rules for discipline. Particularly in high truancy, low income schools, hostility toward the principal varies inversely with the extent of rules regarding discipline.

Teachers expect the principal to "back them up," supporting teacher authority in situations of conflict with parents and pupils. Our findings suggest that formal rules for discipline may communicate to teachers the principal's intention to "back them up." This finding is strongest in schools where the need for direct support from the principal is greatest—those in which poverty and high truancy rates run parallel with school discipline problems.

In contrast to findings about rules for discipline, there is a positive association between formal instruction rules and hostility to the principal; teachers don't like principals who mandate instructional methods, content, materials, or curriculum. was previously suggested that teachers feel most comfortable perthe planning, testing, diagnosis and forming curriculum selection that are part of the instructional role; they ordinarily expect considerable autonomy in this area. classroom, teachers possess a wide range of knowledge regarding instructional methods. They tend to distinguish between instructional activity, which is perceived as a professional responsibility, and discipline, which is perceived as a necessary burden. resources such as teaching macuals and curriculum guides supplement professional standards, remov ng much of the uncertainty, lack of planning, and control associated with other areas of classroom responsibility. Teachers may perceive school rules for instruction as intrusions on their professional prerogative to determine these teaching methods.

These findings suggest that teachers value formal rules for dicipline, but resent them for instruction. They percive discipline rules as a means of support, but instructional rules as a type of control. The former may fill a void in the absence of legitimate, professional sources of authority. Inscructional rules, however, raise conflicts with teacher—expectations of classroom antonomy.



Conclusion

The direction of much recent social science research and school reform has been toward increasing the classroom discretion of teachers by reducing the importance of control mechanisms such as formal rules. Many of the findings in this chapter cast doubt on the notion that formal rules, a key dimension of school bureauteachers to adopt insensitive attitudes toward cracy, force clients, become hostile toward school leaders, or resist parental participation and educational innovations. Most strikingly, rules for discipline are negatively associated with various teacher attitudes termed "pathological." In schools with a high level of formal rules for discipline, teachers express more favorable attitudes toward parents, students, principal, educational reform, and parental participation, than teachers in schools with few such rules. In schools with few rules for discipline, teachers feel a sense of isolation, uncertainty as to the limits of authority, and inadequate resources to handle responsibilities.

Discipline rules may meet fundamental teacher needs for structure and role clarification, particularly in lower-class schools. In the absence of such rules, there is a tendency for teachers to search for mechanisms that reduce feelings of anxiety, threat, and ambiguity. Custodial attitudes, denigration of parents and principal are common. These coping devices bolster a sense of fragile authority, limit the nature of personal obligations, provide priorities for decision-making in the classroom, and deflect responsibility fracthe failure to meet educational objectives. Role defenses such as resistance to innovation and to parental participation are similarly triggered where there is weak school support for precarious teaching functions.

Many of the tasks teachers perform involve precarious values, in which authority is weakly legitimated by school rules or professional expertise. Activities such as discipline and dealing with parents involve precarious responsibilities for teachers; these tasks frequently give rise to feelings of personal stress, ambiguity, and inadequate authority. Teachers may adjust attitudes toward clients by redefining the nature of the teaching role in order to reduce personal involvement, augment authority, and eliminate ambiguity. These attitude changes may be costly, however, for they deflect attention of the teacher away from legitimate educational objectives. By specifying the premises of behavior, school rules may clarify



the nature of teacher responsibility over areas in which they feel vulnerable. As a result, teachers are less likely to embrace adaptive strategies which deviate from societal expectations regarding legitimate teacher behavior.

These findings have important implications for theories of "bureaucratic dysfunctions," as well as for the efforts of school administrators who seek to modify teacher attitudes. The thesis that bureaucratic organization generates a vicious cycle of rule conformity, rigidity, and impersonal treatment of clients has prompted various reformers to call for the de-bureaucratization of schooling. Efforts to restructure school organization through vouchers to students decentralization or community control are motivated, in part, by a desire to ameliorate the "pathological" consequences of bureaucracy.

The findings in this paper raise questions about the validity of educational assumptions underlying such reform efforts. Although specific reforms are not examined, there is a tenuous connection between bureaucratic organization of schools and the kinds of teacher attitudes toward clients so often cited as the justification for changes. Contrary to conventional expectations, the ability of teachers to interact with parents and students without conflict, and to accept pedagogical and organizational reforms, appears enhanced by the reliance on clear and concise rules for teacher behavior in areas such as student discipline and relation with parents. Organizational strategies that enable teachers to make difficult decisions, sort out ambiguous situations, and reaffirm frequently challenged authority are often well received. Extensive school rules for teacher behavior in such circumstances are apparently compatible with teacher expectations and, therefore, a reasonably successful administrative strategy.



Notes

- 1. Woodrow Wilson, "The Study of Public Administration,"

 Political Science Quarterly, Vol. II(June 1887), p. 212.
- 2. Francis E. Rourke, <u>Bureaucracy</u>, <u>Politics and Public</u>
 <u>Policy</u>(Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1969), p. 51.
- 3. Max Weber argued that the discharge of business according to calculable rules, without regard to persons, is essential to objective, efficient performance of tasks.

 H.H. Gerth and C.Wright Mills(eds.), From Max Weber:

 Essays in Sociology(New York:Oxford University Press, 1958), pp. 196-198. Herbert Simon suggests that formal rules influence behavior toward efficiency and rationality by ordering the values and facts by which decisions are made. Herbert Simon, Administrative Behavior (New York: MacMillan, 1947), p. 408.
- 4. ter Blau and W. Richard Scott, Formal Organizations (San Francisco: Chandler, 1962), pp. 87-99.
- 5. See Robert Merton, "Bureaucratic Structure and Personality," in Merton, et. al.(ed.), Reader in Bureaucracy (Glencoe, Illinois: Free Press, 1952), pp. 365-366; Alvin Gouldner, Patterns of Industrial Bureaucracy (Glencoe, Illinois: Free Press, 1954), pp. 93-100; Victor Thompson, Modern Organization (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1961), passim.
- 6. Charles Bonjean and Michael Grimes, "Bureaucracy and Alienation: A Dimensional Approach," <u>Social Forces</u>, vol. 48, no. 3(March 1970), p. 371.
- 7. Melvin Kohn, "Bureaucratic Man: A Portrait and an Interpretation," American Sociological Review, vol. 36(June 1971), p. 463.
 - 8. James G. Anderson, <u>Bureaucracy in Education</u> (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1968), pp. 127, 135.



- 9. Gerald Moeller and W.W. Charters, "Relation of Bureaucratization to the Sense of Power Among Teachers," Administrative Science Quarterly, vol. 10, no. 4(March 1966), p. 457.
- 10. Michel Crozier, <u>Bureaucratic Phenomenon</u> (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964), p. 207.
- 11. The term 'street level bureaucrat' is drawn from Michael Lipsky, "Toward a Theory of Street Level Bureaucracy," (presented at meeting of American Political Science Association), 1969.
- 12. At the time the survey was made, Baltimore had just under 4000 elementary school teachers, of whom 65% were black. They taught 102,000 students, 70% of whom were also black. The student body in Baltimore schools, like that of most other urbar. syste 3, has become increasingly black. From 1965-1971, the proportion of non-white students in Baltimore City elementary schools increased 6%. Patterns of de facto segregation were also becoming more severe. From 1960-1970, the proportion of segregated elementary schools (defined as schools in which at least 90% of the students are black) grew from 44% to 58%, similar to trends observed in other large urban school systems.

In many other respects Baltimore schools are similar to those in other large cities. At the time the data was collected in 1972, declining student enrollment was consistent with the experience in 18 of the nation's 20 most populous cities. Baltimore schools employed over 11,000 people, more than such cities as Boston, Cleveland, Dallas and San Francisco, but fewer than Chicago, Detroit, and Los Angeles. Baltimore's pupil/teacher ratio(24.3 to 1) was somewhat higher than most large cities, but lower than the ratio of a least five of the largest cities. Per pupil expenditures in Baltimore were approximately \$900 a year, a figure higher than cities such as Dallas, Memphis, New Orleans and St.Louis, but lower than New York, Philadelphia, Washington, D.C , and Cleveland. Similarly, average teacher salaries in Baltimore were higher than at least nine other major cities, but lower than nine other cities. In sum,

- although BaltmoreCity schools are certainly not a microcosm of all urban schools, neither are they exceptionally different. The Baltimore school system, its teachers and students, share enough characteristics with their counterparts in other large urban schools to make our findings relevant to schools in other cities.
- 13. Schools serving only special clientele, such as mentally retarded or physically handicapped students, were excluded. In addition, very small schools, such as those with only one or two grade levels, were eliminated from the sample. This left 145 elementary schools in the total population, from which 31 schools were randomly selected in the final sample.
- 14. The need to assure anonymity to teachers prevented a follow-up study to identify bias among teachers who failed to return a questionnaire. However, the pattern of returned questionniares was fairly even, suggesting no apparent bias in the kinds of schools from which teacher responses were obtained. In addition, comparing known characteristics of all teachers in the 31 schools sampled with those who actually tarticipated in the study reveals no major discrepancies on potentially significant factors such as sex, age, race, experience and tenure status.
- 15. The primary means of evaluating Guttman scales is the coefficient of reproducibility, which measures whether a scale meets the test of unidimensionality and cumulativeness. The scales used exceed the standard cut-off point of .9.
- 16. Scale scores were dichotomized into 'high' and 'low' categories. The data was arrayed in 2X2 tables;

 Yule's Q was the statistic used to measure association.
- 17. Howard Becker, "Teacher in the Authority System of the Public School," <u>Journal of Educational Sociology</u>, vol. 27, no. 3(November 1953), p. 130; and Joy Haralick, "Teacher Acceptance of Administrative Action," <u>Journal of Experimental Education</u>, vol. 37, no. 2(Winter 1968), p.44.



- 18. James Q. Wilson, <u>Varieties of Police Behavior</u> (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968), pp. 16-56.
- 19. William Rosengren, "Communication, Organization and Conduct in the Therapeutic Milieu," Administrative

 Science Quarterly, vol. 9, no. 1 (June 1964), pp. 69-90.
- 20. Becker, "Teacher in the Authority System," pp. 129-139.
- 21. Paul Bowman and Charles Matthews, cited in Robert Strom (ed.), The Inner City Classroom: Teacher Behaviors (Columbus, Ohio: Charles Merrill, 1966), p. 83.
- 22. M. Kent Jennings, "Parental Grievances and School Politics," <u>Public Opinion Quarterly</u>, vol. 32 (Fall 1968), pp. 365-366.
- 23. Becker, "Teacher in the Authority System,"p. 130; Sam Sieber and David Wilder, "Teaching Styles: Parental Preferences and Professional Role Definitions," <u>Sociology of Education</u>, vol. 40 (1967), p. 310.
- ?4. The positive association between organizational rules for instruction and custodial teacher attitudes applies only to schools with low ach eving, largely black clientele. In middle-:lass schools, the relationship is negligible. grounds for professional-bureaucratic role conflict are stronger in low achieving, black schools because, in this sample, teachers in these schools generally had a higher level of actual teaching experience. In middle class schools, the relatively low level of experience among faculty members made teachers more amenable to organizational directives. Without a strong ideological commitment to classroom autonomy, bureaucratic rules are not particularly offensive to teachers. When a frequently mentioned aspect of professionalism is controlled, years of teaching experience, one finds virtually no relationship between instructional rules and custodial attitudes.

- 25. Bruce Biddle, Howard Rosencranz and Earl Rankin,

 Studies in the Role of the Public School Teacher,

 Social Psychology Laboratory, University of Missouri,

 Columbia, vol. 2(June 1961), pp. 150-151.
- 26. Robert Hess and V. Shipman, cited in Strom(ed.), Inner City Classroom, pp. 15-16.
- 27. Paul Hunt and Elvin Rasof, "Discipline: Function or Task," in Strom(ed), Inner City Classroom, p. 167.
- 28. Sieber, "Teaching Styles," p. 310.
- 29. In middle class schools, rules for discipline and relations with parents have little bearing on teacher attitudes toward parents. A possible explanation is that parental pressures in these schools are likely to emphasize instructional matters rather than discipline. Instruction is an area in which teachers make strong claims to professional expertise, and are unlikely to rely on personal forms of authority. Where the investment of subjective, personal resources is low, teachers are less likely to feel threatened by parental pressure. Therefore, the prescence or absence of organizational rules has little consequence for attitudes toward parents.
 - 30. C. Wayne Gordon, "The Role of the Teacher in the Social Structure of the High School, Journal of Educational Sociology, vol. 29, no.1 (September 1955), pp. 21-29.
 - 31. Norman Robinson, "A Study of the Bureaucratic
 Role Orientations of Teachers and Principal and
 Their Relationship to Bureaucratic Characteristics of
 School Organization," Ph.D. Dissertation,
 University of Alberta, Edmonton, 1966, p. 204.

